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## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**Hooded Merganser near Los Angeles.**—A female Hooded Merganser (*Lophodytes cucullatus*) was taken by Mr. A. E. Jackson at Del Rey, Los Angeles County, on November 27, 1913. The species is of sufficient rarity in southern California to make the record of this capture seem worth while.—W. LEE CHAMBERS, *Los Angeles, California*.

**A New Bird for the Kansas List.**—On April 12, 1913, I secured a female robin near Lawrence, Kansas, which upon examination proves to be *Planesticus m. achrusterus*, a diagnosis confirmed by Mr. H. C. Oberholser. Other specimens have been collected and examined in this same locality in years past. This race seems to be a regular migrant in April, and may perhaps prove to be the breeding form in the southeastern portion of the State. The nearest point at which this bird has been recorded previously is Van Buren, Arkansas (Howell, Birds of Arkansas, Bul. 38, Biological Survey, p. 92).—ALEX WETMORE, *Biological Survey, Washington, D. C.*

**California Brown Pelican in British Columbia.**—On July 18, 1913, about 10 A. M., between Alert Bay, Johnson Straits, and Round Island, east entrance to Queen Charlotte Sound, British Columbia, I saw a California Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus californicus*). The weather had been very warm, dry and clear; but a dense fog that morning had, for safety's sake, necessitated the "Spokane" to lie at anchor at Alert Bay from five to nine A. M. After it cleared and we were under full steam again, we passed a low, narrow sandbar upon which the Pelican stood surrounded by a flock of sea gulls. With my field glasses I had a long and most satisfactory study of him, in his characteristic (profile) pose, with his neck and bill forming an inverted V.—MRS. F. T. BICKNELL, *Los Angeles, California*.

**More Records of the Emperor Goose in California.**—Mr. Vernon Shepherd, a prominent taxidermist of San Francisco, has reported to me that he has known of at least a dozen specimens of the Emperor Goose (*Philacte canagica*) having been taken in California since 1906. Three of this number he took himself near Dixon, Solano County, California. He has donated to the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology a mounted specimen of a male taken by a market hunter at Colusa, Colusa County, in November, 1912. The specimen was sent to the market in San Francisco and was obtained by Mr. Shepherd from L. Scatena Company.

Mr. Wm. Hackmeier, another taxidermist of San Francisco, has reported the two following records, the first of which was verified by correspondence with the collector.

Male specimen taken November 15, 1913, 10 miles west of Modesto, Stanislaus County, California, by W. D. Toomes. The bird came to the blind alone and was shot. The specimen was mounted by Mr. Hackmeier and is now in the possession of the collector at Modesto.

An individual identified by Mr. Hackmeier as an immature male Emperor Goose was taken near Ingomar, Merced County, California, in December, 1912, by Louis Pfitzer. The bird was not preserved.

The records for Stanislaus and Merced Counties are the first known instances of the occurrence of the Emperor Goose in the San Joaquin Valley. There have been but four previous published records of the occurrence of this goose in California.—H. C. BRYANT, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, Berkeley*.

**Flight of Swainson Hawks at Pomona, California.**—On April 4 of the present year, while collecting in a small wash just east of here, a boy called my attention to a large blackish hawk perched in the top of a small eucalyptus. It was easily shot and proved to be a *Buteo swainsoni* in melanistic plumage. At the shot several more flew from a near-by grove of tall eucalyptus, and a passing train scared out the remainder of the flock which numbered about thirty birds all told. About half of them flew close past me and showed themselves to be in the same dark plumage as the one taken. Of the birds that remained circling over the grove one certainly was of a much lighter color than the rest; but whether these last were as dark as those seen at close range I am unable to say for certain, though such was apparently the case.—ADRIAAN VAN ROSSEM, *Pomona, California*.

**Egrets in Los Angeles County, California.**—On Thursday, September 2, 1913, about ten o'clock in the morning, while the Audubon Society was enroute to Anaheim Landing on the electric cars, we saw three large Egrets (*Herodias egretta*) in the marsh just back of Alamitos Bay. Feeding not far from these large white herons were several Great Blue Herons. When we returned in the afternoon the birds were nowhere in sight.

About March 17, 1913, I saw one Egret on Wilmington Bay, at low tide. On March 23, 1913, I saw what I supposed to be the same bird, in another part of the same bay.—*HARRIET WILLIAMS MYERS, Los Angeles, California.*

**Two Birds New to Oregon.**—*Arquatella maritima couesi*. Aleutian Sandpiper. While climbing about over the ragged rocks on the Oregon coast about two miles north of Netarts Bay on December 31, 1912, with Mr. O. J. Murie, we flushed a small flock of waders. Mr. Murie fired into the flock killing three birds, one of which proved to be an Aleutian Sandpiper, the other two being Surf-birds (*Aphriza virgata*). While visiting the same locality during March of this year (1913) I kept a careful lookout in all suitable localities and on the 10th was rewarded by seeing two more Aleutian Sandpipers climbing about on an almost perpendicular cliff just above the roaring surf. Both were secured and preserved as specimens.

*Dendroica palmarum palmarum*. Palm Warbler. In September, 1913, while collecting birds in Catlow Valley, Harney County, at the west base of the Steens Mountains, one of these warblers was killed by Harry Telford in the willow thicket in the yard of the Home Creek Ranch. It was feeding in company with Audubon Warblers, which were especially abundant at this locality.—*STANLEY G. JEWETT, Portland, Oregon.*

**Probable Occurrence of the Harris Sparrow in Washington.**—A correspondent, Mrs. Lucy M. Ellis, of North Yakima, Washington, under date of November 27, 1912, reports the recent occurrence of a sparrow whose characters were minutely noted and which could have been none other than an immature Harris (*Zonotrichia querula*).

On May 14 of this year at almost identically the same spot in the city of North Yakima, Mrs. Ellis saw a Harris Sparrow in full regalia. In view of the reported occurrences of this bird in both California and Oregon, and in view of Mrs. Ellis's careful description, there can be no reasonable doubt of *Z. querula*'s claim to a place in the Washington avifauna.—*W. LEON DAWSON, Santa Barbara, California.*

**Mallard Nesting in Tree.**—On June 2, at Pauline Marsh, Lake County, Oregon, I found a Mallard nest in what I thought an unusual site. It was placed in a deserted crow's nest, some eight feet up in a clump of willow trees, surrounded by the marsh. The nest was lined with down, and contained six well incubated eggs. Before the female returned to the nest, the crows, that with a colony of Black-crowned Night Herons were also nesting in the willows, descended upon the nest and ate one of the eggs. In one patch of tules at this place we found a large number of ducks' eggs, probably 150, that had been destroyed by these crows. In some cases entire nests had been rifled. The Night Herons likewise suffered much from these depredations, but we did not make an estimate of the damage.—*ALEXANDER WALKER, Mulino, Oregon.*

**Accidents to Spotted Sandpipers.**—Of three specimens of *Actitis macularius* taken along the rocky beach south of Redondo, California, on December 7, 1913, one had the last phalanx of middle toe of left foot gone, with claw hanging by a tendon. Another had the right leg gone at the knee, and the third had last phalanx of outer toe of right foot gone with claw. In every case the amputation occurred at a joint, and the wound had healed in a smooth slightly enlarged knob. Can this be the work of the soft-shell "side-step" crabs so abundant among these rocks? One can imagine one of these crabs catching a toe or leg in its big claw, but unable to subdue a struggling bird, which would finally twist off a toe or leg. Has anyone else noticed similar deformities?—*J. EUGENE LAW, Hollywood, California.*

**A New Record for the Pacific Slope of Southern California.**—On December 12, 1912, while hunting through a large weedy field near El Monte, Los Angeles County, I encountered a flock of San Diego Song Sparrows (*Melospiza m. cooperi*) and Lincoln Sparrows (*Melospiza l. lincolni*) which must have numbered over a hundred individuals. Among specimens collected was a Mountain Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia montana*). In order to make doubly sure, Mr. Grinnell and Mr. Swarth most kindly verified the identification. This would seem to constitute a new record for the Pacific slope of southern California.—*A. BRAZIER, HOWELL, Covina, California.*

**Occurrence of the Black-bellied Tree-duck in California.**—In the possession of Mr. Vernon Shepherd, a taxidermist of San Francisco, there is a mounted specimen of a Black-bellied Tree-duck taken in the Imperial Valley, southern California, in the fall of 1912. The specimen was sent with a sack of ducks to the market near the first of the season and was obtained from L. Scatena Company.

I believe this is the first authentic record of the Black-bellied Tree-duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) for California.—H. C. BRYANT, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, Berkeley.*

**The Great Gray Owl in California.**—Up to the present time there have been but two records of *Scotiaptex nebulosa* for California. Newberry (Pac. R. R. Reports, vi, 1857, p. 77) accredits the species rather vaguely to "the Sacramento Valley". Belding (Land Bds. Pac. Dist., 1890, p. 50) knew of a specimen having been killed "in the hills near Chico", Butte County.

On September 26, 1913, a farm hand on the property of Mr. Chas. S. Wheeler, about six miles south of the town of McCloud, in Siskiyou County, California, killed a Great Gray Owl. To be more specific, as I am informed by Mr. Wheeler, the locality is Section 28, Township 39 North, Range 2 West. The bird was sent to a taxidermist in San Francisco where it was mounted, and subsequently presented by Mr. Wheeler to the California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, where it is catalogued as number 24484 of the ornithological collection. As compared with specimens of *Scotiaptex nebulosa nebulosa* from Alaska and Canada, I can see no noteworthy peculiarities.—J. GRINNELL, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, Berkeley.*

**Nesting of the Gray Flycatcher in Oregon.**—June 7, 1913, I collected a nest and three eggs of the Gray Flycatcher (*Empidonax griseus*) on the juniper flat, at the north of Pauline Mountains, Crook County, Oregon. The parent bird was taken with the nest, and identified by Mr. H. C. Oberholser and Mr. Joseph Grinnell. The eggs were creamy white, and were but slightly incubated. Data reads as follows: Nest composed of small dead weed stems, plant down, hair, shreds of sage-brush bark and some grasses, quilted together and lined with wool and fine feathers. Situated in the crotch of a sage-bush, on a sage and juniper flat. Nest about two feet above the ground. Female bird incubating.—ALEXANDER WALKER, *Mulino, Oregon.*

**Pigmy Owl in San Antonio Canyon, Los Angeles County, California.**—On December 29, 1913, a clear cool day, while hunting squirrels in San Antonio Canyon at an elevation of nearly 4500 feet, near Camp Baldy, I discovered one of these little owls. It was sitting on a bare branch of a sycamore tree and was apparently oblivious to my presence. The specimen was collected and proved to be an adult male *Glaucidium gnoma californicum*, in rather dark plumage. I searched faithfully through the trees near where I found this bird but failed to discover another. This is my first observation of this interesting little fellow, during the fifteen years that I have been about these mountains.—WRIGHT M. PIERCE, *Claremont, California.*

**Unusual Plumage of the Female Linnet.**—On November 2, 1913, being desirous of obtaining specimens of the Linnet (*Carpodacus mexicanus frontalis*) in fresh fall plumage, I shot ten birds at random out of two flocks, near Garnsey, Los Angeles County, California. Three were males and seven females. Of the seven in the streaked, female plumage, two show some red markings on throat, breast and rump. The natural assumption was that these were older birds than the others, acquiring in their maturity a trace of the brilliant plumage of the male, but dissection showed that though they were unquestionably females, they were, from the soft condition of the skulls, undoubtedly birds in first winter plumage, hatched some time during the previous spring or summer. Two fully adult females in the same series, birds of the previous year or older, show not a trace of red. I do not recall seeing in any of the published descriptions of the species mention of the occasional appearance of even a few red feathers in the female Linnet, nor have I ever before observed this condition in specimens handled.—H. S. SWARTH, *Museum of History Science and Art, Los Angeles, California.*

**The Undying Error.**—No more typical example of the persistence of error could be selected than that furnished by the publication and subsequent citation of the alleged nesting of the Black Cloud Swift (*Cypseloides niger borealis*) at Seattle. An ardent amateur, Mr. Matt H. Gormley, a member of a now defunct organization then known as "The Young Naturalists", found a bulky nest containing five white eggs in a warehouse on the Seattle waterfront, and reported it, with due pomp and circumstantiality, as the nest of the long-sought Black Swift. Appearing as it did in the venerated columns of the *Auk* (vol. v, 1888, pp. 424-425), the report met with ready acceptance and was copied far and wide.

Of course those whose natures are tinged with a wholesome skepticism soon made out that the nest in question belonged, not to the dashing tyrant of the skies, but to the more prosaic Purple Martin (*Progne subis*). So far as its author was concerned the mistake, albeit somewhat jejune, was a not altogether unnatural one, because the Martin as a resident of Washington was then very little known. Mr. Gormley at length discovered his own error and was so bored by it, and by the chaffing to which it subjected him, that the subject became tabu among his friends; but so far as known to the writer, he never took the trouble to make a public correction.

Major Bendire correctly diagnosed the case, upon a visit to Seattle in May, 1894, and published his opinion in the authoritative "Life Histories" (vol. II, 1895, p. 177). Yet here we have it in Mrs. Bailey's "Handbook of Birds of the Western United States" (Second Edition, Revised, 1904, p. 229): "Nest.—On cliffs or about buildings. One described by M. H. Gormley on the cornice of a building made of straws, chips, and horsehair, lined with green leaves and paper. Eggs: 5, white." Davie admits the record to his "Nests and Eggs of North American Birds", 3rd and 4th editions, but throws it out of the final 5th edition. Coues avoids the trap, as also does Reed in "North American Birds' Eggs"; but *miserabile dictu!* we find this in Ridgway's masterpiece ("Birds of North and Middle America", Part V, p. 703), under the generic heading *Nephœcetes*: "nidification.—Nest in recesses among rocks or about buildings, composed of straw, feathers, leaves, bits of paper, etc., loosely put together and not held together by salivary secretion"—the pitiful undying error of the Gormley tradition!

One even suspects that this ancient virus has poisoned so classical a fount as the Cambridge Natural History. In Volume IX, "Birds", by A. H. Evans, page 423, we find the following (abridged) paragraph: "In *Cypseloides* \* \* \* *C. niger* of North America \* \* \* *C. rutilus* and *C. brunneitorques*. The genus ranges to Peru and Brazil. The nest, placed in holes in houses and so forth, is made of straw, leaves and rubbish; the eggs are four or five". But Ridgway expressly says of *Cypseloides* (from which he has separated our Black Swift under the name *Nephœcetes*): "Nest of *C. brunneitorques*) composed of moss, shallow and compact, placed in dark culverts, near water (probably in rocky banks or cliffs also)." No; the animus of the Evans paragraph is Gormley (*op. cit. ad. naus.*). We shall never see the last of it!—WILLIAM LEON DAWSON, Santa Barbara, California.

**Albino Anatids.**—In the store of Mr. Wm. Hackmeier, a well-known taxidermist of San Francisco, there is on exhibition a mounted specimen of a female albino White-fronted Goose. The specimen was sent in by a market hunter who killed it near Colusa, Colusa County, California, February 26, 1911. The general color is creamy white shading to light buff on the scapulars and primaries. The scapulars are light buff edged with creamy white. Two conspicuous characters help in identifying this specimen as belonging to the species *Anser albifrons gambeli*. One is the white area at the base of the bill, which, although not contrasting with the cream color of the head, is yet easily distinguishable. The other is the presence of five dusky brown feathers on the breast which give it the characteristic "speckle-belly" appearance. The specimen is in worn plumage. Mr. Hackmeier reports the bill as being "flesh color" and the feet as "pink". Measurements: Folded wing 39 millimeters; bill along culmen 43; tarsus 70.

A female albino Mallard Duck (*Anas platyrhynchos*) was recently presented to the California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology by Mr. George Thompson of Gridley, Butte County, California. The bird was shot by Mr. Thompson along with other ducks near Gridley on January 7, 1914. The entire plumage of the bird is white except for light brownish centers to some of the feathers of the breast, abdomen, and back of neck, and for brownish feathers on top of the head. According to Ridgway's *Color Standards* (1912), the bill is capucine-orange and the feet salmon-orange. Measurements are as follows: Total length 556 millimeters; folded wing 279; bill along culmen 53; tarsus 46.—H. C. BRYANT, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, Berkeley*.